



# Town of Berwyn Heights

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## MAYOR

Stephen D. Isler

## COUNCIL MEMBERS

Jason W. Papanikolas (Mayor Pro Tem)

Amanda M. Dewey

Jeffrey Jay Osmond

Ethan D. Sweep

## Worksession Minutes February 24, 2020 | 7:00 pm

Present were Mayor Stephen Isler, Mayor Pro Tempore (MPT) Jason Papanikolas, Councilmembers (CMs) Amanda Dewey, Ethan Sweep, and Jeffrey Jay Osmond. CM Osmond arrived 15 minutes late due to traffic. Also present were Town Manager (TM) Maria Broadbent, Chief Kenneth Antolik, Public Works Supervisor Luis Cardenas, Assistant to the Town Manager (TMA) Yvonne Odoi, Treasurer Michelle Rodriguez, Clerk Kerstin Harper, Lindsey & Associates President Bob Diss, Boys & Girls Club President Brandon Batton and citizens.

### 1. Announcements

Mayor Isler announced that Officer Krouse saved a man's life who was about to commit suicide by jumping off the Beltway overpass at Cherrywood Lane on February 18. Officer Krouse had responded to Cherrywood Lane to back up a Prince George's County officer already at the scene. When the man threatened to jump, Officer Krouse pulled him down from the fencing. Mayor Isler commended Officer Krouse for this act of heroism and dedication to duty.

CM Sweep noted that people in distress or people who know someone who is thinking about taking his life can contact a national suicide prevention hotline 1-800-273-8255. CM Dewey thanked Officer Krouse for his service and everything the police are doing every day to help the community. She also announced a February 25 meeting of the College Park City Council where recent removals of hundreds of trees at the disc golf course on Paint Branch Parkway will be discussed.

### 2. Discussion Items

**Investment Policy:** TM Broadbent said tonight's presentation on investment policy seeks to identify creative options for investing the Town's savings to earn better interest rates. However, any type of new investment must accord with the Town's investment policy, which was adopted in the mid-1990s. For tonight's discussion, the Council has been provided an updated investment policy based on the City of Berlin's, MD and GFOA's policies. The Town's auditor, Lindsey & Associates' President Bob Diss, is present to discuss investment policy generally and options available to Berwyn Heights.

Mr. Diss said he has checked applicable law that defines what a municipality is allowed to invest in. State law allows only 8 types of investments, such as Treasury bonds, Certificates of Deposits or the Maryland Local Government Investment Pool (MLGIP) and has strict diversification requirements. He has also checked investment policies of several municipalities, which tend to be shorter than the updated Berwyn Heights policy. Either the Town's proposed policy or a shorter sample policy he provided would be fine.

TM Broadbent asked whether sweep accounts, whereby a bank automatically transfers idle cash into a safe but higher interest-earning investment option at the close of each business day, such as a money

market fund, would be within the confines of federal and state law. The Town's bank last year discussed this option with the Council. Mr. Diss said he has not seen a policy that covers this investment type but recommends checking with the bank itself to find out what type of accounts the cash is invested and that it meets legal requirements.

CM Dewey thought a shorter policy would leave more flexibility for different types of investments. TM Broadbent said investment is not her expertise and recommended trying to establish a group of qualified residents who might be interested in advising the Town. Such a group would not have to meet more than once a year. The Council agreed to attempt to recruit residents for an investment group in the Bulletin. TM Broadbent will draft a notice and continue to work on the investment policy.

***FY 2021 budget enhancements:*** TM Broadbent explained that this continues the presentation of budget enhancement requests from Departments and Town Organizations which started at the last worksession. The Council is requested to give feedback on whether a given funding request is to be included in the FY 2021 proposed budget. A list of all enhancement requests is provided in the agenda packet.

Administration: TMA Odoi presented the following funding requests:

- \$1,040 for 8 conference chairs for the G. Love Room.
- \$2,000 to replace worn stacking and folding chairs for the Town Center 2<sup>nd</sup> floor.
- \$2,700 to replace broken built-in stove in the Senior Center kitchen.
- \$14,000 for custodial services of Town Hall, Town Center, Police Station and Public Works building. A request for bids has been advertised and 2 proposals were received.

The Senior Center oven replacement was assigned top priority, followed by conference room chairs and folding chairs. Folding chairs may be taken up in the next budget. The custodial services contract renews annually but has been rolled over for the last 3 years. Rebidding of contract helps keep cost down and quality up.

Clerk Harper presented the following funding requests:

- \$38,100 for upgrading the Berwyn Heights cable TV broadcast to high definition.
- \$9,000 for codification of the Town charter and ordinances.
- \$1,000 annually for supplementation of code and online hosting and licensing.

Upgrading broadcasts to HD would require replacing all video related components of the system. Funding would come from the Town's cable reserve, which is restricted to BHTV expenses. Codification would systematically organize the Town's code by subject matter into chapters and sections, making searches for specific regulations easier. A web-hosted code would be more accessible, easier to search, and could include legislative history of particular legislation. No funding decision was made.

Treasurer Rodriguez presented the following funding requests:

- + \$800 for audit services for total cost of \$13,750.
- + \$34,000 in Maryland State Pension contributions for total cost of \$140,000, due to an increase in employer contribution rate to 9.8%.
- Estimated + \$34,935 for employee health insurance for total cost of \$183,600 due to anticipated rate increase. Health insurance is through the Local Government Insurance Trust (LGIT), and comprises health, dental and vision insurance for an estimated 15 employees, including future employees in currently vacant positions. When available, Council would like to know what portion of this increase is due to rate increase and what portion of increase is due to more employees covered.
- + \$600 in Mayor & Council Miscellaneous appropriation to pay for spay & neuter services of feral cats, per request by CM Dewey. CM Dewey explained this is an effort to reduce feral cat colonies

in Town and reimburse residents who are already doing this of their own accord. The Town could partner with local non-profits to keep the cost down. The cost of a bare bones spay/neuter procedure is roughly \$60, and less in some cases. CM Dewey said she can provide a description of the proposed program prior to budget adoption.

Public Works: Foreman Luis Cardenas & TM Broadbent presented the following budget requests:

- + \$3,700 to replace a worn outdoor storage tent with storage shipping container. The shed houses canopies, tables, chairs for events and riding mowers.
- + \$9,112 to replace overhead doors in Public Works storage building, which cannot be repaired anymore. The building houses landscaping and snow-blowing equipment as well as paints, oil, ice melt, etc.
- + \$2,675 to replace ceiling insulation in storage building. The insulation was put up by staff and is falling off the ceiling. Council requested to obtain estimate for spray foam insulation.
- + \$10,000 - \$110,000 for a new initiative proposed by CM Dewey to collect compost (food waste) through a contract vendor. Options range from self-pay by residents, to drop-off, to full curbside collection paid by Town. Vendor is working with City of College Park and other municipalities as well as companies in the greater Washington area. The City of Hyattsville's has started a program, in which yard waste and compost are collected together and processed at the County's facility on Richie Road. Greenbelt is considering a compost collection program as well and is open to partnering with other municipalities.
- + \$50,530 to purchase new F350 dump truck per vehicle replacement schedule.
- + \$6,000 for snowplow and salt spreader for the above truck, not currently on the vehicle replacement schedule. Mr. Cardenas said a salt spreader is difficult to add to this truck.
- + \$199,000 to replace 2016 Freightliner refuse truck, plus radio and antenna, per vehicle replacement schedule. The Town needs 3 trucks in good working order to perform all refuse and recycling collections.
- + \$103,810 to replace leaf vacuum machine, scheduled to be replaced in FY 2018. TM Broadbent said leaf vacuuming is hard on equipment and leads to frequent breakdowns, as happened this season. It is an expensive way to collect leaves and many cities have abandoned it, asking residents to bag their leaves instead. Mr. Cardenas said the current leaf vacuum has a new motor now and could last for another 2 years. All Public Works vehicles undergo regular preventative maintenance checkups, including the vacuum.
- + \$250,000 for the next phase of road repairs to stay on schedule. Funding will come from Highway User Revenues (HUR) and the Town's road tax.
- + \$30,000 for improvements proposed by the Walkable, Bikeable Task Force (WBBH) to be funded from the infrastructure reserve containing \$621,000. This could include speed tables, signage and road markings among other things. Council may consider piggybacking onto an Edmonston Road sidewalk project the City of College Park is planning.

Police Department-Neighborhood Watch: NW/EP Chair Mike Attick and Cpl. Krouse presented.

- + \$5,914 to replace the current NW/EP trailer with an aluminum enclosed 7'x14' trailer to be paid from the NW/EP trailer reserve, which contains ca. \$12,300.

Mr. Attick said he has not drafted an FY 2021 budget for his committee yet but plans to ask for the same amount as last year. He would like to purchase 2 AED units plus training and some giveaways. TM Broadbent said the NW/EP budget should be reviewed by the Police Department first. The trailer reserve has ample funds to replace the old trailer which stores emergency supplies. She questions whether a new trailer is needed since NW/EP has had difficulty recruiting new members, maintaining the trailer and keeping an up-to-date inventory.

CM Sweep said he recently toured the trailer with Cpl. Krouse, who thinks the trailer has many things that are potentially useful, but they could be stored in a smaller, more maneuverable trailer, such as the one specified in the budget request. Cpl. Krouse confirmed the presence of useful supplies, but he would add a generator and backup battery to ensure there is light and power in an emergency.

Mayor Isler said a trailer would only be useful if it is maintained and asked whether that can be guaranteed. Perhaps a vendor could be hired to perform regular maintenance on the trailer. TM Broadbent said, with the reorganization of the NW/EP last year, the Committee was given responsibility for the upkeep and should use its budget to do that. She has not received any requisitions for NW/EP purchases this year. MPT Papanikolas said he is not opposed to replacing the trailer and associated equipment but would like to see a plan to reinvigorate the Committee with it. Mr. Attick was advised to discuss trailer equipment and supplies with Chief Antolik and draft a budget for the next year. The trailer will be added to the proposed budget as an enhancement and added to the police vehicles replacement reserve.

Police Department - vehicle replacement reserve: TM Broadbent provided the Council with a hypothetical replacement reserve for police vehicles. It would set aside 1/7<sup>th</sup> of the price of a new vehicle in the reserve each year so that it can be replaced after seven years. New vehicles would be gradually added to the reserve going forward. To date, only the most recently purchased police vehicle has been added to the replacement schedule. Setting up a reserve for the entire existing fleet would cost over \$400,000. Whether and to what extent to fund this reserve is something the Council may want to consider when finalizing the FY 2021 budget.

Police Department – vehicle purchase: Chief Antolik presented a vehicle replacement request for a 2008 Chevy Suburban. The Suburban was donated to BHPD by the Secret Service for solving a fraud case at the SECU bank. It is used mostly in special circumstances, such as heavy rains or snow and to drive guests. The vehicle has relatively low mileage and could fetch a respectable resale price.

- + \$82,000 for a Ford Expedition Max special services police vehicle, plus outfitting.

Town Organizations – BHES PTA: TM Broadbent provided a document from the BHES PTA clarifying the budget request made at the previous worksession.

- + \$2,800 for Mobile Science Lab and Maryland Zoo programs requested by the PTA.
- + \$3,600 for Imagination Stage and Bladensburg Waterfront field trips requested by BHES.

Boys & Girls Club: BGC President Brandon Batton presented the Boys & Girls Club budget request, which is less than last year's because the Public Works Department is performing maintenance of the field and comfort station.

- + \$1,500 for liability insurance.
- + \$800 for MSYSA injury insurance.
- + \$300 for marketing materials.

Green Team: CM Dewey presented the budget request for the Green Team, which totals \$3,000.

- + \$1,250 for events, workshops and outings.
- + \$750 for children's summer environmental program.
- + \$500 for promotional materials.
- + \$500 for obtaining Bee City USA certification.

Fees & Fines: TM Broadbent said it is proposed to raise the notary fee from \$1 to \$2 per page notarized. The Council would authorize the new fee with adoption of a comprehensive fee & fine schedule.

**Ordinance 177-9 Budget transfer for Town Center improvements:** TM Broadbent explained that the Town Center maintenance & repair appropriation was overspent this year because expensive repairs had to be made to an automatic door closer in the Senior Center and the heating system. New carpeting for the Senior Center is also planned. It is proposed to transfer \$11,000 from the Code Department's salary line item, which has unspent money because of a vacancy, to the Town Center maintenance & repairs line item. Ordinance 177-9 would amend the FY 2020 budget to authorize the change. Further, it is proposed the Council introduce and adopt this Ordinance at the same March 11 Town meeting.

**Resolution 2-2020 Creating Administrative Manager position in Public Works Department:** TM Broadbent explained the Town has not been able to fill the Public Works Director position vacant since the retirement of Kenneth Hall. The low unemployment rate and demand for this type of qualification make it unlikely this position will be filled soon. Creating the administrative manager position allows for hiring a manager responsible for business side of the operation, such as budgeting, personnel, and purchasing, while continuing to search for a director. It also allows to plan for succession in the event of future retirements and resignations and to have an additional leadership position in the Department. This resolution will be up for adoption at the March 11 Town meeting.

**Census Day staffing:** CM Dewey said the Council has set aside April 1 to assist residents with completing the Census using the computers in the G. Love Room. She asked if Councilmembers can be present during the day to help. Between 5:30 – 8:00 p.m., the Education Advisory Committee will be there to help with the Census and voter registration, while offering civic lessons and refreshments. CM Sweep offered to be present in the morning and MPT Papanikolas in the afternoon. Town office staff may serve as backup for periods when no one is there.

### **3. Minutes**

CM Dewey moved and CM Sweep seconded to approve the January 27 worksession minutes. The motion passed 5 to 0. CM Dewey moved and CM Osmond seconded to approve the February 3 worksession minutes. The motion passed 5 to 0.

### **4. Department Reports**

CM Dewey reported that she attended the last PGCMA meeting in Greenbelt and congratulated volunteers on a packed-house Team Trivia Night hosted by the Recreation Council and Movie Club. She also announced upcoming meetings and the March 3 candidate filing deadline. TM Broadbent added she plans to hold a couple of orientation sessions for candidates tentatively scheduled for March 9 and 23 at 7:00 p.m.

### **6. Town Council Schedule**

The Council reviewed the upcoming schedule. The schedule was corrected to add April 13 to the PGCPS' Easter vacation.

### **7. Citizens Discussion**

Phil Ventura, 57<sup>th</sup> Avenue, suggested the Council consider looking for a Public Works Director with more practical skills, who knows how to fix things rather than someone with only managerial experience. He was informed that the position of a supervisor of operations already exists could be filled by someone with practical skills.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:35 p.m.

Signed: *Kerstin Harper*, Town Clerk